

# THE POLYNESIAN.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY, AT HONOLULU, OAHU, SANDWICH ISLANDS.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1840.

Vol. 1.—No. 14.

## Terms of the POLYNESIAN.

Subscription. Eight Dollars per annum, payable in advance; half year, Five Dollars; quarter, Three Dollars; single copies, 25 cents.

Advertising. \$2, 25 for three insertions of one square; forty cents for each continuance; more than a half and less than a square, \$1, 75 for first three insertions, and 30 cents for each after insertion. Half a square, \$1, 25 for first three insertions, and 20 cents for each succeeding insertion.

Terms of yearly advertising made known on application to the editor.

## A CHAPTER FROM MY SKETCH BOOK.

(Concluded from No. 12.)

"Lions!" returned he, "oh you have heard of them, then, we have just now as noble a couple as you will find this side the Atlantic, or may be the other too; however, about that I won't be stubborn. You see that large tent over yonder, on the green; well, there they have got Painters, Tigers, Cantelopes and Camels; Monkeys by the dozen, and two amazing big lions, that look fierce enough to take away a man's stomach for a week."

"Well, that is pretty tolerable slick, I calculate, what? real natural! and no hocus-pocus stuffed skins? well if we don't have some fun with those creatures my name isn't Jack Doolittle. Won't we Mr. Parleyvoo?"

"Monsieur Contretemps, if it you please; we shall be very appy to visit them. Ah, ma chere patrie, ave you ever vice the National collection at Paris? Ah, voila vice menagerie magnifique! Gentlemen will you do me the honor," he added bowing, and extending his snuff box towards us.

"Thank ye, Mr. Countrytongs, but I don't deal in the article," said Mr. Doolittle. "Ah, but my dear Do-but-lectle, you will find it ver good, extraordinaire; No! vell, chacun a son gout."

"I'd just as leave smell rotten tree dust, as I made the chap do, that first got me to try that tobacco powder, and put such an eternal fit of sneezing on me, that I have not got over it yet, but it comes back at odds and ends of times, and sets me in a pucker of passion, I tell ye."

"Vat you do at him?" inquired Monsieur.

"Yes, what was it?" repeated I.

"Well you must know, for it's not pretty particularly short, well no matter about that, however as I was saying."

"Pardonez moi, I do not recollect."

"Darn it, now, you hadn't ought to do that as I was saying, no I wasn't saying anything; now you see that is the effect of getting frustrated, so I'll begin as good as new. You see, a chap that went to school with me, down east, put it into my head to smell some of that tarnal snuff; he said as how it was genteel, and all that, and he came over me rather more than I relished on the whole; well, as I said, it threw me considerable out of sorts, and says I, all to myself, young man you'll get served for that, as sure as your name is Peaceful."

"Oh Tranquille! que c'est drole!"

"So one day we had been taking a kind of a tramp, and we went up a hill, not excessive high, nor terrible steep. However, we got to the top, and sat down to breathe a second, on the hollow trunk of an old dead tree, that had been laying there for a heap of years for what I know; and we got talking about one thing and another, says I, "Peaceful Zador, you're broader across the shoulders than I am." "No," said he "Zach, I ain't." "Oh, your grandmother," says I "you would whip two like me as easy as hull corn, however, we can soon tell, do you think you can creep through that log?" and he swore it was big enough for both of us. "Now," says I, "I'll lay you the biggest pumpkin on our farm, you can't creep through as quick as I." "Done," was the word, and down I went, and in the quivering of a corn leaf, was out on the other side, none of the worse for wear. Then he laid his hat down, and walked into the log in fine style, and I heard him pushing his way

through like a mole underground; "how do you like the snuff," says I, as I knocked away a stone from behind the tree, and down it rolled, like a snow-slip in spring time, whizz, bounce and away, till it brought up against a young apple tree, and smashed its rotten sides to pieces. Out jumped Peaceful, for all the world like the old beauty Minerva in the days of Jupiter:—I just waited to hear his yell, and I knew his wind was not hurt, then off I shot, and the first thing I knew rightly I was shelling corn by the side of Patience Peabody, with a face as long as the 21st of June."

"Rather rough handling," I observed. "If you do serve your friend in dat manner, I had not offer to you my tabac; but gare, I did mean noting."

"Oh, certain! Mr. Countrytongs; but here we are at the wild beast's den, and I wish some particular conversation with these gentlemen lions."

After usual preliminaries, we were introduced into a circular area of considerable size, surrounded by cages, containing various native and foreign animals, which, though pronounced by the Frenchman to be vastly inferior to the national menagerie at Paris, was 'pas tres mauvaise.' Mr. Doolittle was extremely inquisitive about the nature and habits of all the animals; and his curiosity was several times only allayed by the pugnacious disposition manifested by its subjects. Once he seized a monkey by the tail to examine it more closely, but was glad to release it, after receiving, a pretty severe bite from the snappish beast. But his attention, as well as of all the other spectators, was engrossed by a lion of terrific size and majestic mien. A large black mane overhung his forehead, and mantled his gigantic and muscular neck. His eyes were closed, and his head reclined and supported upon his fore paws that hung from the front of the cage, and his beautifully smooth and tawny body reposed gracefully at full length, while his tufted tail was occasionally moved to and fro with exquisite grace and dignity. The keeper and the proprietor of this exhibition, aroused him from the recumbent posture, by blows from an ignoble cowskin, and by pinching the ear of the royal animal, caused him to utter such a roar as cleaved the air like thunder. By frequent irritations his rage was excited, his eyes flashed, he lashed his sides furiously, and moved rapidly back and forth in his narrow cell.

"There," exclaimed the keeper, "is the unrivalled African lion—there is not a match for him in the country, nor in Europe."

"Ah! if I was in France," ejaculated Mr. Contretemps.

"Not so tarnal far as that, neither," said Mr. Doolittle, with an air of thoughtfulness; "what will you bet that I won't find something that will make him knock under, and beg for quarters?"

"Any thing you have got to throw away—two, three, four hundred dollars," was the confident answer.

"Four, let it be then; and let the landlord hold the stakes. If I am not on the spot by ten o'clock tomorrow morning, ready to do what I have promised, the money is yours. So good bye till then."

The host held the wager, and Mr. Doolittle went off in high glee, cautioning us not to be surprised in case of his absence during the night. This notice was of some advantage, for had he remained absent, and that without warning, my doubts of his sanity and safety would have received an unpleasant confirmation.

Deprived of him, as a companion, Mr. C. who was, in reality, a very sensible man when conversing in his mother tongue, which I gave him to understand was not a dead language to me, made the hours fly very rapidly by his lively conversation, his shrewd and just observations, and his patriotic eulogiums on his native land. Night had set in, but Mr. Doolittle had not yet appear-

ed; and fatigued by the exertions of the day, we early retired to rest.

It was late when I rose, and on coming down to breakfast I noticed an unusual bustle in the bar-room, and in the precincts of the tavern. The report of the unprecedented challenge had been bruited abroad by many-tongued rumor, and such is the universal thirst for novelty, that vehicles of every description poured into the village, freighted with young and old, men, women, and children, to behold a combat such as the bull fights of Spain had never equalled or the shows of Rome never surpassed. Still, the champion had not arrived, and as it wanted but half an hour of the appointed time, the stake holder, Monsieur and I, proceeded to the intended field of battle, followed by the curious and gaping multitude. A station was assigned us near the cage, and a large space defended by posts and ropes for the convenience of all parties concerned. The keeper was enjoying himself at the expense of the "crazy Yankee," as he called him, and scouting the idea of the possible fulfillment of his promise.

"The fellow," said he, "has got more money than he knows what to do with; pshaw! Nero has not touched a morsel for twenty-four hours, and is as savage as wolf; the devil himself would make but half a meal, could he lay hold on him. What time is it, landlord?"

"It wants five minutes of ten," was the reply."

It is impossible to describe or conceive the intense interest that thrilled through the crowd as the fatal moment drew near. Every breath was stilled, and curiosity forgot the numerous animals around, to gaze wholly on the Lion. He stood erect, slowly shaking his head and bulky mane, as opening his closed eyes, he uttered a plaintive howl, that, by degrees subsided into a rough, sepulchral groan.

"A half minute of time!" exclaimed the Landlord.

"Hallo, there," shouted a voice from without, "I did not bargain to pay the toll when I came back!" and Mr. Doolittle burst past the door-keeper, rushed through the throng, and leaping the barrier, stood in the midst, just as the landlord uttered, "Ten!" He was covered with mud and sweat, and his garments were torn—he wore no hat—but under his arm held a handkerchief, apparently containing something within it. The keeper looked at him with an air of triumph, as he said to him: "I knew you would lose, as well as I knew ten o'clock must come; four hundred dollars is not such a bad wind-fall, not to speak of the rapid business we have done to day."

"Stop that everlasting tongue of yours, don't crow before morning, as the farmer said to his rooster: as you say, four hundred dollars is not so bad. Did I not so tell you that I would find a master for your growler yonder, and by buttons! I would have fought him myself for want of a better, but to fight with dumb beasts is good enough for those that are like them."

"Oh, le sauvage!" said Monsieur.

"Yes, I would have pounded his hide at a steam-boat rate, I tell ye; but there's no occasion for all that trouble just now, so let us by, mister—but stay, we will have the judges first."

Accordingly, two respectable farmers were associated with myself as umpires of the contest, and having declared our readiness to begin, we begged Mr. Zach to produce his combatant.

"That is easily done now, although I had an everlasting bother to get the creature," said he, as he slowly unfolded the handkerchief, and produced a common *land tortoise*!

"Pho!" said one.

"The man is crazy!" exclaimed the village doctor.

The keeper smiled, and looked greedily towards the stakes.

"Oh, wait a second," observed Zach, while he cautiously thrust his champion under the grating of the lion's cage, and then drew back to watch the progress of the operation. The lion had lain down, with his back towards the tortoise, and he now looked carelessly over his shoulders, as much as if he would have said, "you are not eatable." Soon, however, as if conscious of the contempt of the huge beast, the tortoise opened his house with a short—sharp hiss, but as quickly closed it, for the lion started at the sound, and turned round upon his opposite side. He then rose, snuffed at, and walked round it several times, without discerning any sign of life; and presently, as if in sportive humor, laid his paw upon its back, drawing it back and forth. He then settled himself in a *conchant* position, and commenced a game of foot-ball, throwing the tortoise from side to side, as a boy tosses a ball from one hand to the other; and appearing mightily delighted with his amusement. The object of this disrespectful treatment remained as quiet, and apparently as lifeless as a stone, and the spectators began to tire of what they now conceived to be a concerted hoax, to draw their patronage. Suddenly Don Lion changed his plan, and once more snuffed about the tortoise, then extending his long rough tongue, he began to lick it as a cat does her young kittens, at one time above, at another below, when in an instant, and to the unspeakable astonishment of all present, but one, the tongue of the lion was seen to be encumbered with the whole weight of the tortoise; the cunning reptile had silently opened the crevice of his shell, and in an unguarded moment entrapped the end of the lion's tongue in its vice-like grasp. In vain did he endeavor to extricate himself; he started back—shook his head violently, and even applied his paws to force the enemy from his hold. But every moment served but to increase his agony in a part so exquisitely sensitive, and render the gripe still tighter than before. He lay down, and tumbled with intensity of suffering; the moisture ran from his mouth, his lips were mantled with white foam, and from those eyes that so lately flashed fire, streamed ignoble tears, while his groans came upon the ear, with a sensation of such piteous and sickening horror as I had never experienced. It seemed as if every nerve was wrung with anguish, and every muscle was powerless. The rusties shrunk back in terror, and many a lass's fair cheek was moistened with trickling tears; it was a sight too painfully graud, to behold without emotion; to see that magnificent animal, the king of the forest, with which we associate every idea of native nobleness and magnanimity, to see him whom a ponderous and mighty elephant had failed to subdue, writhe under the power of an inglorious reptile, and sink nerveless in the grasp of one of the lowest created beings. The keeper who had been struck with amazement at this unexpected exhibition, was now terrified beyond measure at the situation of his royal favorite, and offered twice the amount of the stake if the victor would release him. This offer he declined, but pocketing the money which was unanimously declared to be his, he bade him keep the lion quiet for a few moments. This course the animal seemed to be prompted to by instinct; he lay still as death, scarce breathing, and motionless in every limb. Very soon the tortoise finding no violence was intended, relaxed his hold, and the lion started up with a bound and a yell that shook the stoutest heart; but so entirely exhausted was he, that he sank into the farthest corner of the cage, unwilling, or unable to move, or even to devour the food placed before him.

Zach removed the conqueror, and as we walked towards the tavern, he amused himself with examining its beautiful shell, and its admirable adaption for defence.

"A pritty smart critter," said he, "considering it was never brought up to the trade."

Y. P.